

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A safety device for a propane tank, the tank including a gas valve and a collar, the device comprising:

a) a cup, the cup having a size sufficient to enclose a substantial portion of the valve, and

b) means for locking the cup in place over the valve, wherein the locking means, in a locked position, prevents access to the valve,

wherein the locking means includes a cross-member and a handle portion,

wherein the cross-member and handle portion are distinct, wherein the handle portion is distinct from the cup, and wherein the handle portion is insertable into an opening formed in the cross-member.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) A safety device for a propane tank, the tank including a gas valve and a collar, the device comprising:

a) a cup, the cup having a size sufficient to enclose a substantial portion of the valve, and

b) means for locking the cup in place over the valve, wherein the locking means, in a locked position, prevents access to the valve,

wherein the locking means includes a cross-member and a handle portion,

wherein the cross-member and handle portion are distinct, and wherein

the handle portion is insertable into an opening formed in the cross-member, and The safety device of Claim 3/

wherein both the cross-member and handle portion include means for engaging the collar.

5. (Original) The safety device of Claim 4, wherein the cross-member includes a pair of spaced-apart baffles, the baffles having mutually-aligned holes, wherein the holes are spaced sufficiently away from a main body of the cross-member to enable a part of the handle to rest below a level of the holes.

6. (Original) The safety device of Claim 5, further comprising a padlock having a shank, the shank being insertable through the holes of the baffles.

7. (Currently amended) A safety device for a propane tank, the tank including a gas valve and a collar, the device comprising:

a) a cup, the cup having a size sufficient to enclose a substantial portion of the valve, and

b) means for locking the cup in place over the valve, wherein the locking means, in a locked position, prevents access to the valve,

wherein the locking means includes a cross-member and a handle portion, The safety device of Claim 2/

wherein the handle portion is permanently affixed to the cross-member.

8. (Original) The safety device of Claim 7, wherein the cross-member is affixed to the cup.

9. (Original) The safety device of Claim 8, wherein the cross-member has two ends, and wherein the cross-member includes means, at both of said two ends, for engaging the cross-member with the collar of the tank.

10. (Original) The safety device of Claim 9, wherein one of the engaging means comprises a generally C-shaped member.

11. (Original) The safety device of Claim 9, wherein one of the engaging means comprises a pair of generally spaced-apart parallel members, the parallel members being sized to fit around a portion of the collar, the parallel members including mutually aligned holes for accommodating a shank of a lock.

12. (Currently amended) A safety device for a propane tank, the tank including a gas valve and a collar, the device comprising:

a) a cup, the cup having a size sufficient to enclose a substantial portion of the valve, and

b) means for locking the cup in place over the valve, wherein the locking means, in a locked position, prevents access to the valve,

wherein the locking means includes a cross-member and a handle portion, THE SAFETY DEVICE OF CLAIM 2/

wherein the cross-member and handle portion comprise a unitary structure.

13. (Original) The safety device of Claim 12, wherein the cross-member includes means for engaging the collar at diametrically opposed locations.

14. (Original) The safety device of Claim 13, wherein one of the engaging means includes an L-shaped structure having a hole which accommodates a shank of a padlock.

15. (Original) The safety device of Claim 13, wherein the cup is affixed to the cross-member.

16. (Currently amended) A safety device for a propane tank, the tank including a gas valve and a collar, the device comprising:

a) a cup, the cup having a size sufficient to enclose a substantial portion of the valve, and

b) means for locking the cup in place over the valve, wherein the locking means, in a locked position, prevents access to the valve,

*The safety device of Claim 14, wherein the locking means includes a U-shaped member insertable through at least one opening formed in the cup, and means for locking the U-shaped member in position after the U-shaped member has been inserted through the cup.*

17. (Original) The safety device of Claim 16, wherein the U-shaped member has two prongs, wherein a first of said prongs is longer than a second of said prongs, wherein said first prong is sufficiently long to extend beyond the collar when said first prong is inserted through the cup, wherein said first prong includes a hole which accommodates a shank of a padlock.

18. (Original) The safety device of Claim 17, wherein said second

prong has a hole, and wherein the hole of said second prong is spaced-apart from an end of said second prong.

19. (Currently amended) A method of securing a propane tank, the tank having a valve, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) covering the valve with a cup-shaped member, and
- b) locking the cup in place so that the cup cannot be readily dislodged from the valve, and so that access to the valve is blocked,

wherein the cup-shaped member is attached to a cross-member, and wherein the covering step comprises positioning the cross-member over the valve, and wherein the locking step comprises threading a handle portion through an opening in the cross-member and locking the handle portion to the cross-member.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently amended) A method of securing a propane tank, the tank having a valve, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) covering the valve with a cup-shaped member, and
- b) locking the cup in place so that the cup cannot be readily dislodged from the valve, and so that access to the valve is blocked,

*The method of claim 19/* wherein the tank has a collar, and wherein the cup-shaped member is attached to a cross-member having two ends, the cross-member having means for engagement of the cross-member, at both of its ends, to the collar, and wherein the covering step comprises positioning the cross-member such that the cup covers the valve and such that the ends of the cross-member engage the collar, and wherein the locking step comprises locking one of the ends of the cross-member to the

collar.

22. (Currently amended) A method of securing a propane tank, the tank having a valve, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) covering the valve with a cup-shaped member, and
- b) locking the cup in place so that the cup cannot be readily dislodged from the valve, and so that access to the valve is blocked,

*The method of claim 19, wherein the tank has a collar, and wherein the locking step comprises threading a U-shaped member through holes in the cup, and locking the U-shaped member to the collar so as to prevent movement of the cup-shaped member.*